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FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
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INFO RUEHXR/RWANDA COLLECTIVE
RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 KINSHASA 001024

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [PHUM](#) [PREF](#) [KPKO](#) [CG](#)

SUBJECT: Eastern Congo Developments: Nkunda-
Obasanjo Meeting; CNDP Consolidating Military
Gains in Rutshuru; Dungu Population Flees LRA

¶1. (U) The items contained in this report consist principally of spot information from various sources. This report is not exhaustive, nor can all the information contained therein be confirmed at this time.

¶2. (SBU) Summary: During his November 16 meeting with UN Special Envoy Obasanjo, CNDP leader Laurent Nkunda presented a list of demands for the GDRC. Nkunda voiced his support for the principles of the Goma Accord, but he declared Amani dead and the International Facilitation as biased. Nkunda agreed to integrate the CNDP into the national army, but only after the FDLR problem is dealt with. Nkunda also said he wanted to integrate his administrative entities in CNDP areas into Congolese government structures. President Kabila has reportedly agreed to a GDRC-Nkunda meeting in Nairobi, however, because of scheduling conflicts, the meeting may not take place until December. The CNDP has overrun the FARDC base at Rwindi and is on the outskirts of Kanyabayonga, but multiple MONUC contacts told us that the CNDP has not attacked Kanyabayonga. MONUC believes the CNDP will try to consolidate its gains in the Rutshuru area, and perhaps turn its attention to Masisi. A military court in Goma has sentenced four soldiers to life in prison for rape, looting, and desertion following the near-collapse of Goma on October 29. The LRA continues to evoke fear in Province Orientale: up to 34,000 people have fled Dungu, which has a population of 55,000. End summary.

Obasanjo-Nkunda Meeting

¶3. (SBU) Press reports that Nkunda outlined eight demands to Obasanjo during their November 16 meeting at Jomba, two kilometers from the Bunagana border with Uganda:

- direct negotiations with the GDRC in a third country under neutral mediation;
- renegotiation of DRC-Chinese business contracts;
- cessation of all FARDC-FDLR cooperation;
- protection of all minority groups in the DRC;
- integration of the CNDP into the national army;
- integration of police and civil servants in CNDP-controlled areas into the national administration;
- promotion of good governance and anti-corruption measures; and
- after all other conditions are met, a position in the national army for Nkunda.

¶4. (SBU) According to a report from someone at the meeting in

Jomba, Obasanjo and Nkunda met alone for a long period before holding an open session. Nkunda's main point was that the CNDP now rejected Amani because it was a government-controlled process, with a biased International Facilitation. Nkunda reportedly reaffirmed his commitment to the principles of the Goma process, without mentioning the Actes d'Engagement. He did not mention anything about a "national liberation movement." Our sources speculated that Obasanjo, in his one-on-one with Nkunda, had convinced Nkunda to back away from his "national uprising" pronouncements.

¶15. (SBU) Nkunda agreed to honor the CNDP's unilateral cease-fire and to respect humanitarian corridors. A MONUC contact told PolCouns that while Nkunda met with Obasanjo, CNDP forces were moving in the vicinity of Kanyabayonga; after the CNDP had consolidated its positions, it announced to Obasanjo that it would respect a ceasefire. Obasanjo subsequently called Nkunda to complain about the ceasefire violation. Nkunda reportedly re-affirmed his commitment to the ceasefire and to withdraw 40 kilometers from his front lines; there are no signs, however, that he has done this yet.

¶16. (SBU) Regarding the integration of CNDP administrators into national structures, Nkunda was unclear whether he meant into national or provincial entities. Nkunda reportedly said he "was ready to enter the government."

¶17. (SBU) Our MONUC contact told us that the Obasanjo-Nkunda meeting had gone reasonably well, with Nkunda pledging his full support to the Special Envoy. Obasanjo had proposed a verification mechanism to guarantee a cease-fire. Nkunda agreed, but only without MONUC participation. Our MONUC source added that in fact MONUC was so

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stretched that it would not want to take on such a task. According to MONUC, Nkunda was demanding that the "FDLR problem" be completely solved before CNDP would integrate into the FARDC.

Potential GDRC-CNDP Meeting

¶18. (SBU) Obasanjo reportedly obtained President Kabila's commitment to direct GDRC-Nkunda talks in Nairobi. Nkunda has also agreed to this format, but it is unlikely they will happen until December, at the earliest because of logistical issues and travel schedules.

Other Political Developments

¶19. (SBU) UK Foreign Office Minister for Africa, Asia, and the United Nations Lord Malloch Brown arrived in Kinshasa November 17 for a two-day visit to discuss the conflict in the East. He will travel on to Goma.

Security Situation

¶10. (SBU) Information from a November 17 MONUC briefing in Goma indicated that the CNDP had overrun the FARDC base at Rwindi, 10 kilometers southeast of Kanyabayonga. FARDC troops have retreated northward toward Lubero, exhibiting very poor command and control. MONUC reported that the CNDP has declared that it will not advance on Kanyabayonga.

¶11. (SBU) Although Radio France International reported that the CNDP had attacked Kanyabayonga, both MONUC Goma and MONUC Kinshasa insisted that the CNDP had not attacked the city. A member of MONUC's Joint Mission Analysis Cell told PolCouns that, strategically, CNDP did not need to attack Kanyabayonga. Our MONUC contact predicted that the CNDP, which now controls most of the Rutshuru area, will consolidate its gains in the region. The CNDP now controls commercial flows from the Grand Nord to the Petit Nord, as well as trade from Uganda. Our MONUC interlocutor added that, perhaps, the CNDP might now instead turn its attention to the Masisi area. The CNDP was carrying out a big recruitment drive in the areas it has recently conquered.

¶12. (SBU) In the view of our MONUC contact, it was a moot point trying to determine whether or not the CNDP had broken its unilateral cease-fire. The pattern was clear: CNDP would claim a FARDC provocation, then it would capture territory. CNDP rank-and-file had been frank with MONUC about their offensive intentions.

¶13. (SBU) Speculating as to why the CNDP would initiate an attack on Rwindi during the visit of Special Envoy Obasanjo, Alpha Sow, Head of MONUC Goma, said the Nkunda had claimed that FDLR forces were at Rwindi. MONUC Colonel Cunliffe said that the North Kivu Brigade had confirmed the presence of FDLR in the area. However, MONUC JMAC told PolCouns that it doubted whether there were FDLR forces in sufficient number at Rwindi to attract the CNDP's attention.

¶14. (U) Radio Okapi reported that, as of early morning November 18, a firefight continues between FARDC and Mai-Mai Pareco forces near Kirumba, 250 kilometers north of Goma in southern Lubero. The Pareco commander, "General" Lafontaine Mukambutho, told Radio Okapi that his forces had engaged FARDC forces, which had deserted Kanyabayonga northwards to Lake Edward. Lafontaine said the action was intended to force FARDC forces back to Kanyabayonga.

¶15. (SBU) A military court in Goma sentenced four FARDC soldiers to life in prison November 17 for desertion, rape, looting, and unlawfully distributing ammunition. The same court sentenced another FARDC soldier to six months in prison for shooting a civilian. Three other FARDC soldiers, accused of desertion and misdemeanors, were acquitted. All of the infractions took place October 29-30, when the FARDC in Goma collapsed. Military officials are reportedly investigating other dossiers involving soldiers accused of murder, rape, looting, and desertion.

LRA Update

¶16. (U) According to Radio Okapi, 34,000 people have fled the city of Dungu, which has a population of 55,000. The population fears continued attacks by the LRA, and has fled into the bush and to areas near Niangara and Isiro. Schools and business operations have

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ground to a halt, as students and teachers have fled to outlying areas. The territorial administrator remains concerned about the fate of 350 pupils who have been kidnapped by the LRA.

¶17. (U) Radio Okapi reported that on November 16, a joint operation by the FARDC, Congolese National Police, and the national intelligence service netted 38 suspected LRA rebels in the village of Isiro, 600 kilometers northeast of Kisangani. The security forces acted based on rumors circulating that LRA rebels were among the large number of IDP's who had recently moved from Dungu to Isiro.

GARVELINK